

CONAN THE BARBARIAN

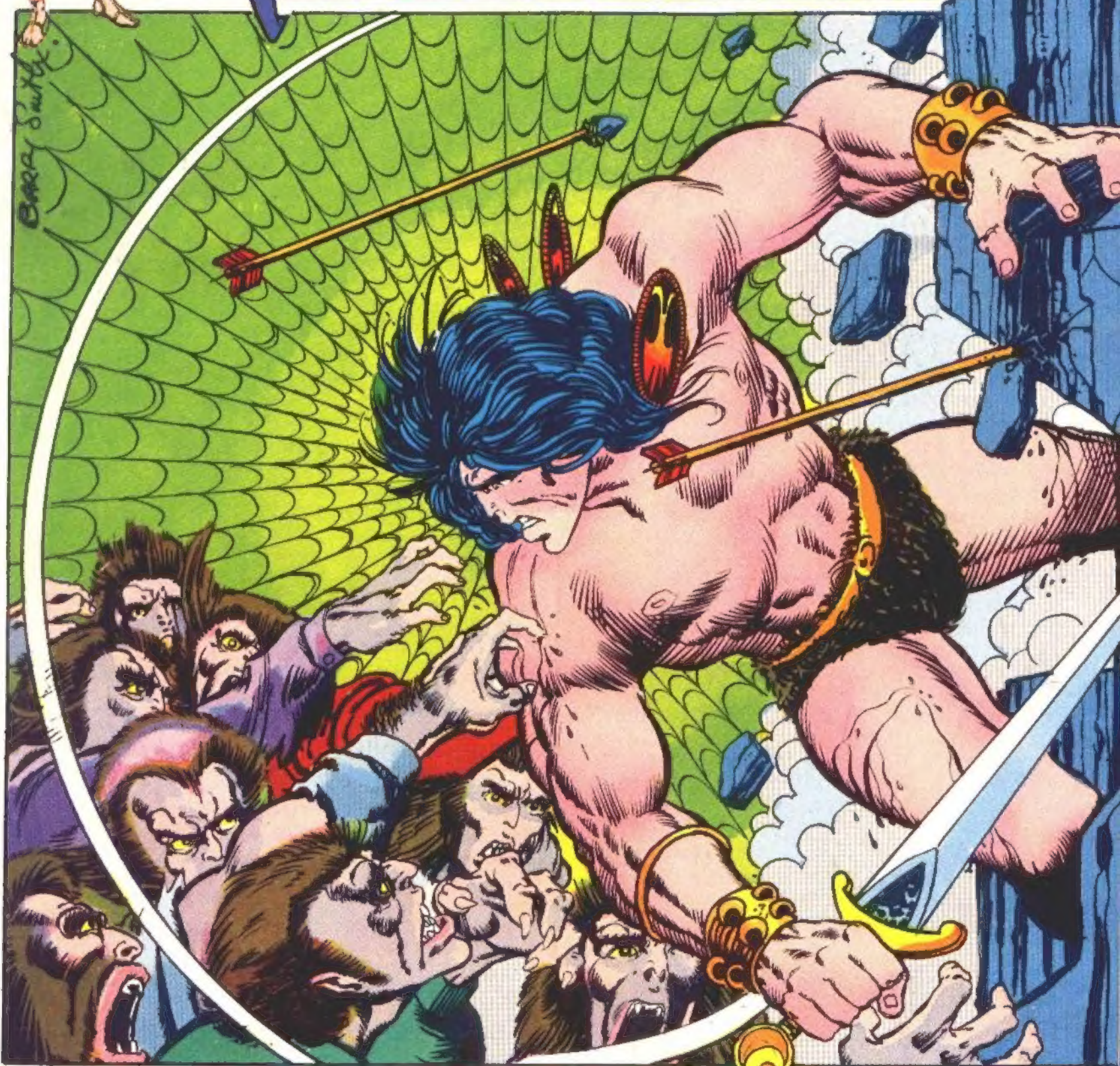
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

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CONAN

THE BARBARIAN



WEB OF THE SPIDER-GOD!

CONAN THE BARBARIAN!™

WEB of the SPIDER-GOD

SOMEWHERE EAST OF
OPHIR: A SHRIEKED
COMMAND BENEATH
THE GOLDEN, SAND-
SWEPT MOON---

KILL!
KILL HIM!

CROM'S
DEVILS!
MARAUDERS...
WAITING IN
AMBUSH BY THAT
OASIS!

IS THERE
NOWHERE
ON THIS
DESERT THAT
MEN DO NOT
COME AT YOU
WITH SWORDS?

STAN LEE
PRESENTS A LANDMARK OF
HEROIC FANTASY BY:
ROY THOMAS ★ BARRY SMITH
WRITER ARTIST

SAL BUSCEMA INKER
SAM ROSEN LETTERER

FEATURING THE EPIC HERO CREATED
BY: ROBERT E. HOWARD

STORY PLOTTED BY:
JOHN JAKES
AUTHOR OF
"BRAK, THE BARBARIAN"

768#

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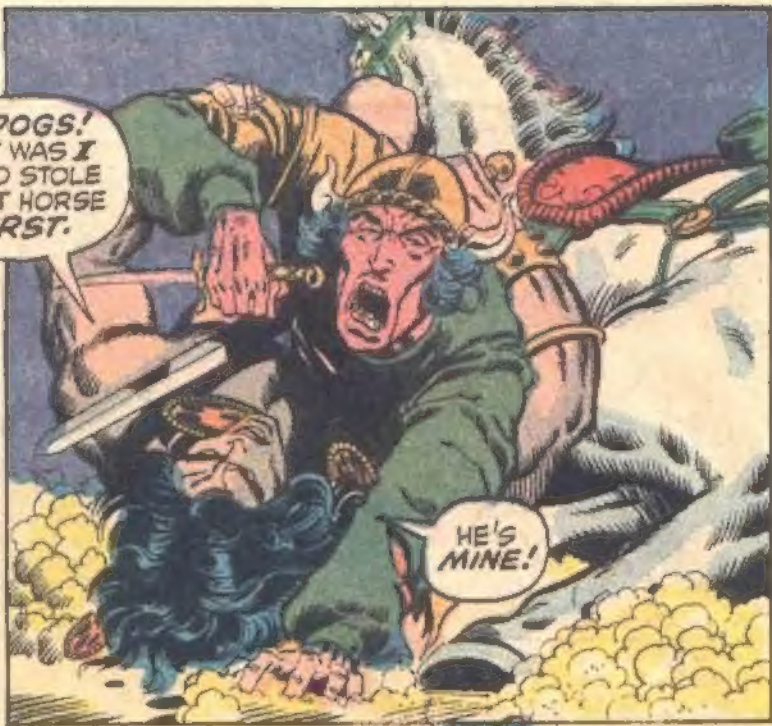


HE'S DOWN. GET HIM!

AYE! THE MAN HIMSELF MEANS NOTHING--

BUT, THE BROTHERHOOD NEEDS HORSES.

DOGS! IT WAS I WHO STOLE THAT HORSE FIRST.



HE'S MINE!



HOLD HIM DOWN! BY ISHTAR, HE IS ONLY ONE MAN.

YET HE FIGHTS LIKE TWENTY, GREAT SARKON.

NOW THEY'VE GOT HIM, THOUGH. HE'S---



MITRA!



YOU'RE NO PALE-BLOODED NOBLEMAN, AS WE THOUGHT.

JUST THE SAME, MY CLUB WILL---

EH? BARELY GRAZED YOU.



BUT, IT MADE YOU TURN, DIDN'T IT, BARBARIAN--

--SO I COULD GET YOU ON THE WAY BACK!

UNNGH



YOU TALK
BIG UP
THERE ON
YOUR
HORSE,
MAN.

LET'S SEE
HOW YOU
SOUND--ON
FOOT.



YOU'LL
NEVER
KNOW,
OUT-
LANDER.

SARKON--
SHALL WE--?

STAND
AWAY, OLD
ONE. IT WAS
MY STEED
HE SLEW---



THIS BLOW
I'LL STRIKE
MYSELF!

ARRR



WELL,
SCUM?
RISE. I
SAID
RISE!

I'LL HEAR YOU BEG
FOR MERCY YET!

NAY,
SARKON---



--CAN'T
YOU SEE
HE'S
DEAD?!

THEN, TAKE
HIS SWORD---
BRING ME HIS
MOUNT-- AND
WE'LL BE
OFF.



WE'RE TOO
CLOSE TO THE
ZAMORIAN
BORDER---
AND TO THRICE-
CURSED
YEZUD---

--FOR ME
TO REST, TILL
WE'RE
SAFELY
BACK IN
CAMP!

--MORNING--
DESERT SUN
BATHES SAND AND
STONE IN WARMTH---
THEN HEAT---



AT LENGTH, A GREAT BRONZED
FIGURE STIRS---RISES HALTINGLY
---DETACHES ITSELF FROM THE
BLEAK TABLEAU---
IN SHORT, LIVES---

---AND, LIVING, REMEMBERS:

AN OASIS---
MARAUDERS---
A MAN OF MANY SCARS---
A MAN CALLED SARKON---



---AND,
REMEMBERING
---HATES!

"VENGEANCE! VENGEANCE! VENGEANCE!"
THE CRY GROWS LOUDER WITH EACH
HAMMER-THROB OF ACHING TEMPLES---

AND THE MAN
WANDERS
AWAY FROM
THE NOW-
FOR-
GOTTEN
OASIS---



--TOWARD
THE RED,
FAST-
RISING
SUN---

--TOWARD
HE-
KNOWS-
NOT-
WHAT---

---TOWARD
YEZUD---

WATER---

AT LAST, THE MAN'S
SHADOW GROWS
LONG ONCE MORE..

AHEAD, GREAT
CRAGGY FINGERS
BECKON---
MORE SHADOWS---
BLESSED
SHADOWS---



THE MAN CRAWLS, EXHAUSTED,
INTO THE SHADE---

NIGHT FALLS---
AND THE VOICE
IS THERE AGAIN---

IT SINGS A SWEET, SAD SONG
OF WINE SPILLED, IN NORTHERN
REVELS---OF SPRINGS THAT
NEVER CEASE THEIR BUBBLING
---OF WATER---

AND ALL THE WHILE, THE MAN'S TEMPLES
KEEP THROBBING--THROBBING---

DAWN
AGAIN---

THE MAN
HUNGERS---

HOT IN PURSUIT OF
A MANY-SCALED
MEAL, HE TOPS THE
LIP OF A SMALL
DECLINE---

---ONLY TO STOP THE
CHASE---MESMERIZED
BY THAT WHICH HE THERE
BEHOLDS---

WATER...!?

BY THE
GODS
--IT
IS---

--IT'S
WATER!!

THROWING CAUTION TO THE SLEEPING DESERT WINDS,
THE MAN HURLS HIMSELF-- WHOLLY, BODILY-- INTO
THE LIMPID POOL---

FOR A HEARTBEAT,
HIS FRENZIED BRAIN
IS COOLED---

THEN, THE
TRUTH
STRIKES
HOME---

---THAT THERE IS
NO WATER---

-- BUT
ONLY---

SAND!

IS NOTHING
REAL IN THIS
ACCURSED
WASTELAND?

SUDDENLY:

IN A SUNBURST
OF MADDENING
SILENCE, THE
DESERT GIVES
ANSWER---

---THAT THERE IS
BUT ONE REALITY
AMID THESE SOUL-
DEVOURING
SANDS---

---THAT
NOTHING
IS REAL---
BUT ONLY DEATH.

SUDDENLY:
THE MAN KNOWS
---THAT HE IS GOING
TO DIE---

AND, THE KNOWING
WAKES THE THROB-
BING, THROBBING,
WHICH BEATS ANEW
UPON THE ANVIL OF
HIS FEVERED MIND---

---BEATS
AN ENDLESS,
STACCATO
PATTERN---

-- UNTIL --
HE REELS --



--- AND,
FALLING,
BEHOLDS --



--- A
VISION --!

HANNANAN
MAC LIR!



-- AN EERIE PHANTASM OF THE MIND AND EYE --
THE IMAGE OF A HUGE, SLAVERING SPIDER-THING --



-- AND, HELD
FAST IN ITS
GAPING MAW,
THE MAN SEES
-- HIMSELF!

NOW, THE SPECTRE
FADES -- AND STILL --

BY THE
BONES OF
CROM!

IS THIS
DYING?
IS THIS --
HELL?



I SEE THE
SONS OF
THE SPIDER-
THING -- WITH
GREAT BLACK
WINGS --

-- SWOOPING
DOWN, FROM
OUT OF A
DARK-WEBBED
SKY --!



SK RRAWWWKK

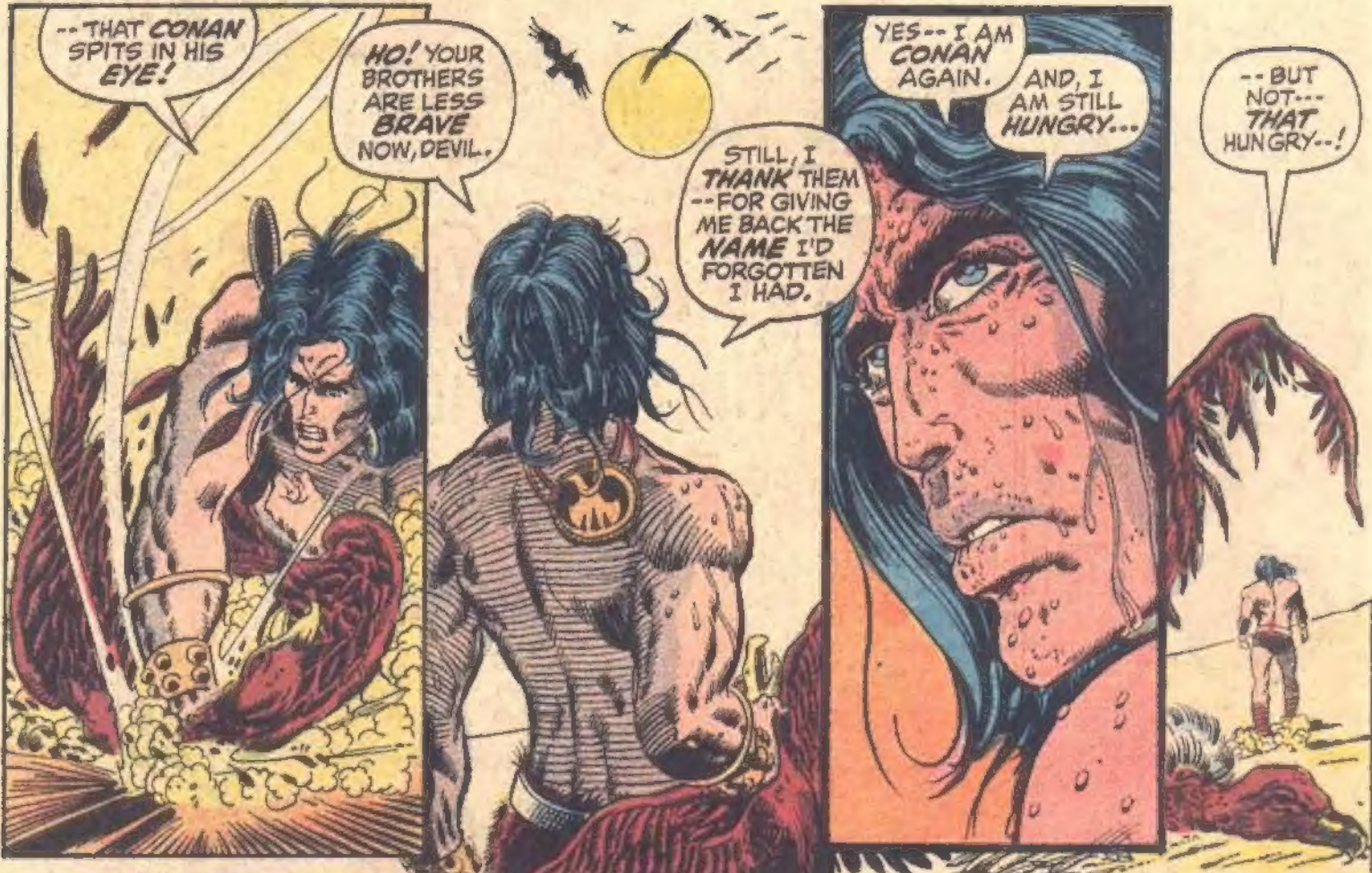
HAH!
NOT YET,
HELLSPAWN.

I'LL SHOW
YOU THE WAY
A MAN DIES!

LET BROKEN
WINGS CARRY
BROKEN BODY
BACK TO YOUR
LOATHSOME
SIRE, AND
TELL HIM --



SKKRAN



-- THAT CONAN
SPITS IN HIS
EYE!

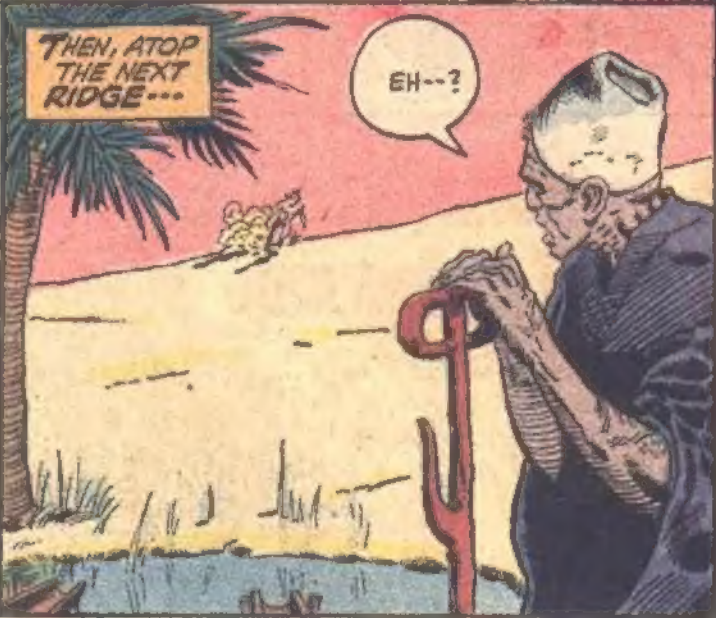
HO! YOUR
BROTHERS
ARE LESS
BRAVE
NOW, DEVIL.

STILL, I
THANK THEM
--FOR GIVING
ME BACK THE
NAME I'D
FORGOTTEN
I HAD.

YES-- I AM
CONAN
AGAIN.

AND, I
AM STILL
HUNGRY...

-- BUT
NOT---
THAT
HUNGRY--!



THEN, ATOP
THE NEXT
RIDGE---

EH--?



HOLY
MITRA!



HERE,
OUT-
LANDER--

WATER--- RAISED BY
MY OWN SHADUF.

IT WILL GIVE YOU
HOPE--- WHICH IS
MORE THAN IT COULD
DO FOR ME.



SOON, AS CONAN SITS UPRIGHT ONCE MORE---

BE THANKFUL,
BARBARIAN, THAT
IT WAS OLD
THANIX WHO
FOUND YOU, AND
NOT--- THE
OTHERS.

OTHERS? THEN MORE
MEN HAVE PASSED BY
HERE, IN RECENT DAYS?

NOMADS,
PERHAPS...?

---LED BY A MAN WITH MANY SCARS?

SCARS? NO--- NOR WERE THEY MERE NOMADS.

THEY WERE THE HOODED PRIESTS OF OMM, THE MANY-LEGGED-- THAT DEMON-THING WORSHIPPED IN THE ZAMORIAN CITY OF YEZUD!

YOU'RE A STRANGER HERE. YOU'VE NOT HEARD OF THOSE WHO SERVE THE SPIDER-GOD...

"YOU'VE NOT HEARD YOUR ONLY DAUGHTER CRY OUT IN STARK TERROR..."

"--NOR SEEN THOSE BLACK-HEARTED RIDERS FROM THE EAST BEAR DOWN LIKE A SUDDEN DESERT STORM--"

LEA! RUN-- RUN!

"--TO STEAL AWAY THAT WHICH YOU MOST LOVE!"

HAN!

YOU'LL DO, WENCH!

GIVE THANKS TO OMM, OLD MAN--

--WE NEED NO MORE SACRIFICES THIS MOON!

I WAS MAKING READY TO PURSUE THEM-- AYE, EVEN TO EVIL YEZUD ITSELF--- WHEN YOU APPEARED.

AND NOW, FAREWELL. THIS IS NO QUARREL OF YOURS.

YOU SAVED MY LIFE.

SADDLE THIS BRUTE--AND I'LL MAKE IT MINE!

THANIX, WHY DON'T THE ZAMORIANS PUNISH THIS CITY WHICH SLAYS WOMEN ON THE ALTAR OF A... SPIDER-GOD?

YEZUD IS NEAR THE BORDER, CONAN.

THEY SAY IT IS A CORINTHIAN PROBLEM--- WHILE MY PEOPLE, THEY JUST CURSE THE ZAMORIANS!

AHHH...

OLD MAN-- LOOK!

THEN, AS NIGHT COMES 'ROUND ONCE MORE---



AY, THAT
MUST
BE IT.

YEZUD!

TWINKLING SPIRES--
BESIDE A BLACK-STONED
MOUNTAIN.

I'VE SEEN THIS
CITY BEFORE,
THANIX--

--IN A DREAM,
PERHAPS--

--ALL LATTICED
WITH WEBBING,
AND LORDED OVER
BY A GREAT BLACK
SPIDER!



NOW THAT I
BEHOLD THE
CITY, CONAN--
I DESPAIR.

HOW CAN WE EVER HOPE TO PASS
THRU ITS HIGH WALLS, WITHOUT-?

DON'T
WORRY: I
HAVE A
PLAN.

BESIDES,
ANYTHING
IS BETTER
THAN RIDING
THIS HAIRY,
HUMPED
NAG A
MOMENT
LONGER.

COME.



BUT TELL ME--
DIDN'T THE
ZAMORIANS
EVER TRY
TO ENTER
YEZUD?

OH YES.
LEGENDS
TELL OF
SEVERAL
ARMIES
THAT WENT
IN THRU ITS
GATES...



THEY'RE A BIT MORE
VAGUE ON WHETHER
THEY EVER CAME
OUT AGAIN.

CONAN
--STOP!
THEY'LL
SEE US!

YES-- I
GUESS
THEY
WILL.



SO, WE MIGHT AS
WELL GIVE THEM
A GOOD VIEW.

NO, IN THERE! IS
EVERYONE DRUNK
OR ASLEEP?

CONAN--
I BEG YOU,
ON ISHTAR'S
BODY--



WHO IN THE NAME OF THE
HIGH PRIEST--?

I AM CONAN--
AND YOUR HIGH
PRIEST IS A SLIMY
JACKAL I'VE
COME TO SLAY.

MITRA!



A
JACKAL,
EH?

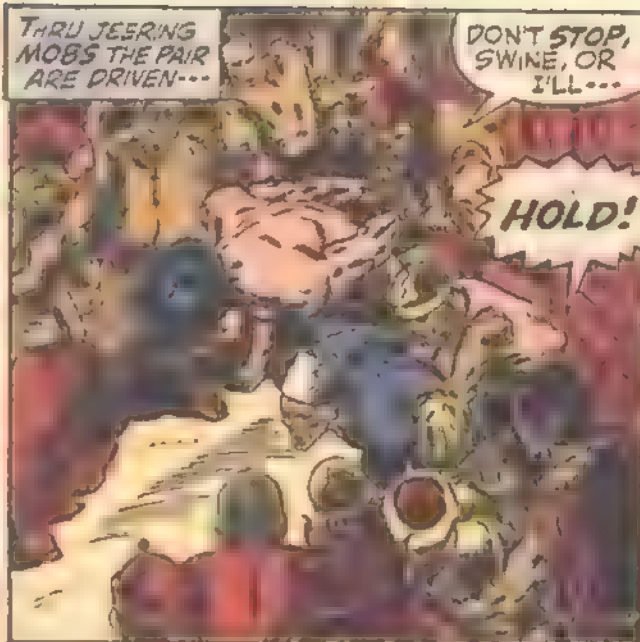
WE'LL
LET YOU
TELL HIM
THAT--IN
PERSON!

**SEIZE
THEM
BOTH!**



FOOL BARBARIAN!
NOW SEE WHAT
YOU'VE DONE!?

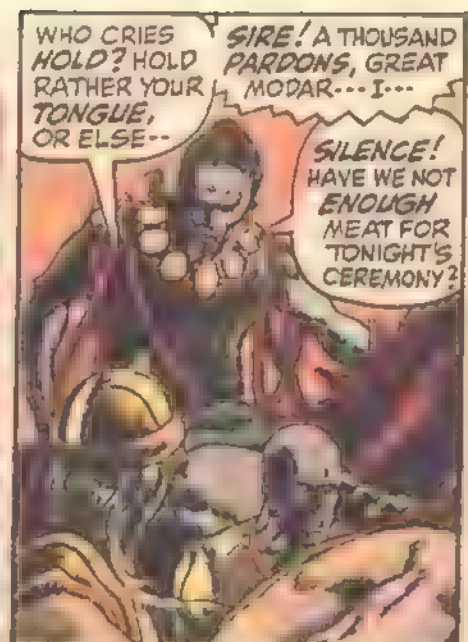
QUIET,
FOSSIL--
AND KEEP
MOVING.



THRU JEERING
MOBS THE PAIR
ARE DRIVEN---

DON'T STOP,
SWINE, OR
I'LL---

HOLD!



WHO CRIES
HOLD? HOLD
RATHER YOUR
TONGUE,
OR ELSE--

SIRE! A THOUSAND
PARDONS, GREAT
MODAR--- I---

SILENCE!
HAVE WE NOT
ENOUGH
MEAT FOR
TONIGHT'S
CEREMONY?



AYE, HOLY ONE!
BUT THIS SAVAGE
VOWED TO KILL
YOU, AND SO---

HE DID? LET
ME SEE HIM.



WHY DID YOU
COME SEEKING
MODAR, CUR?

DID MY MEN CARRY
OFF YOUR WOMAN
SOMETIME? YOUR
CHILD?

MUTE,
EH?

PERHAPS GREAT
OMM CAN LOOSEN
HIS IGNORANT
TONGUE.

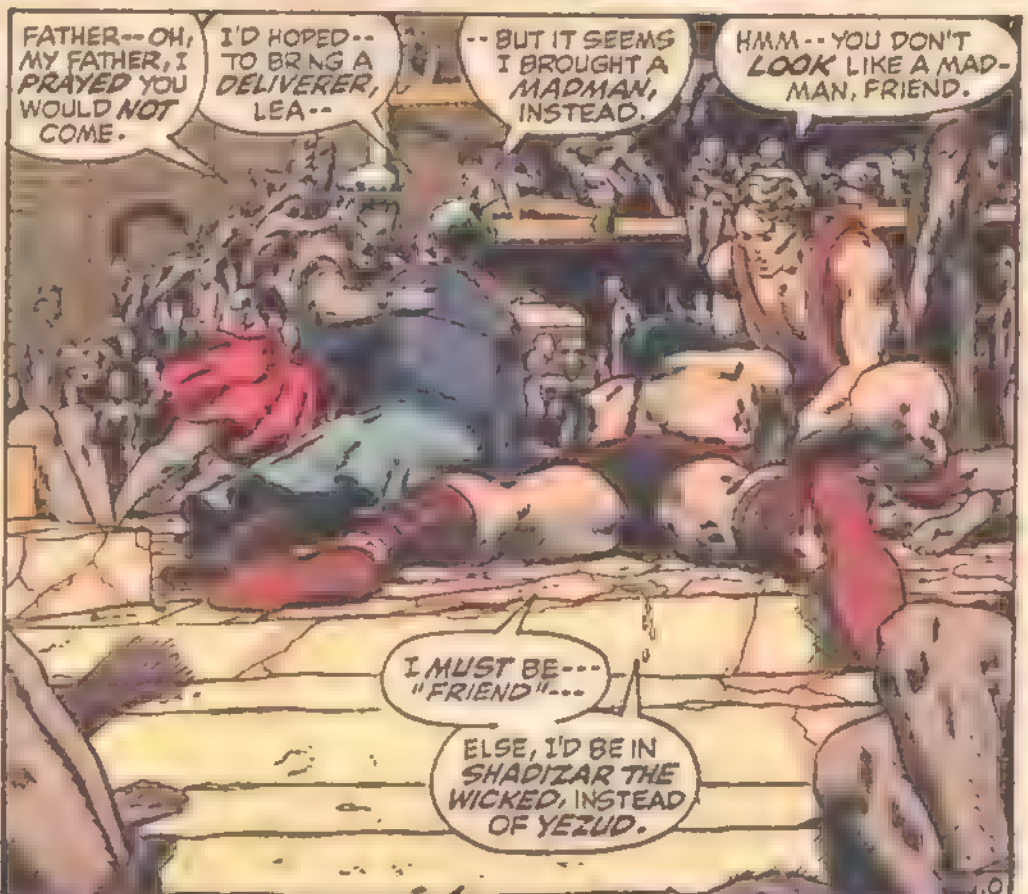
BRING HIM
AND HIS FARMER
FRIEND FIRST TO
THE PIT TONIGHT.

NOW,
AWAY
WITH THEM!



IN THERE,
PIGS--

--WITH
OTHERS
OF YOUR
LK!



FATHER-- OH,
MY FATHER, I
PRAYED YOU
WOULD NOT
COME.

I'D HOPED--
TO BRING A
DELIVERER,
LEA--

-- BUT IT SEEMS
I BROUGHT A
MADMAN,
INSTEAD.

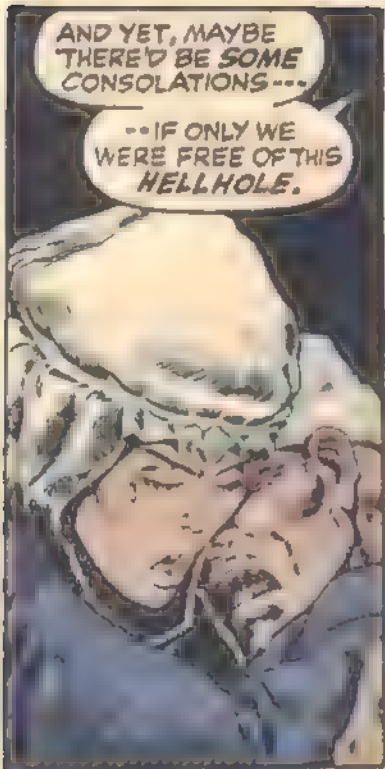
HMM-- YOU DON'T
LOOK LIKE A MAD-
MAN, FRIEND.

I MUST BE---
"FRIEND"---

ELSE, I'D BE IN
SHADIZAR THE
WICKED, INSTEAD
OF YEZUD.

AND YET, MAYBE THERE'D BE **SOME** CONSOLATIONS---

--IF ONLY WE WERE FREE OF THIS **HELLHOLE**.

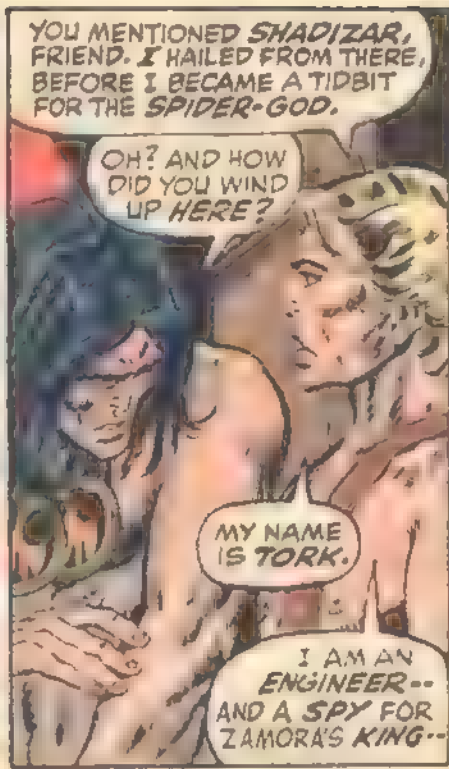


YOU MENTIONED **SHADIZAR**, FRIEND. I HAILED FROM THERE, BEFORE I BECAME A TIDBIT FOR THE **SPIDER-GOD**.

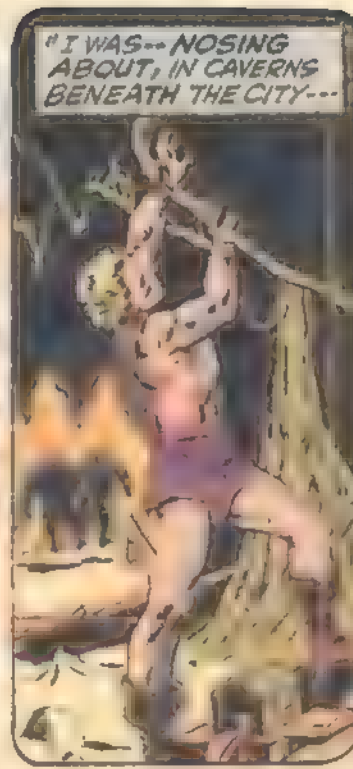
OH? AND HOW DID YOU WIND UP **HERE**?

MY NAME IS **TORK**.

I AM AN **ENGINEER**-- AND A **SPY** FOR **ZAMORA'S KING**--




"I WAS--**NOSING** ABOUT, IN CAVERNS BENEATH THE CITY--



"---WHEN I WAS SET UPON BY **RUFFIANS** WHO DWELL DOWN THERE---



"---AND WHO TURNED ME OVER TO THE **PRIESTS**.



FOR, YOU SEE, **YEZUD** RESTS ON A **FAULT** IN THE EARTH. IT'S **HONEYCOMBED** UNDERNEATH WITH **WORKED-OUT MINES** AND **EMPTY WATER-COURSES**.

A FEW **BOULDERS** SHIFTED HERE AND THERE, AND I COULD--

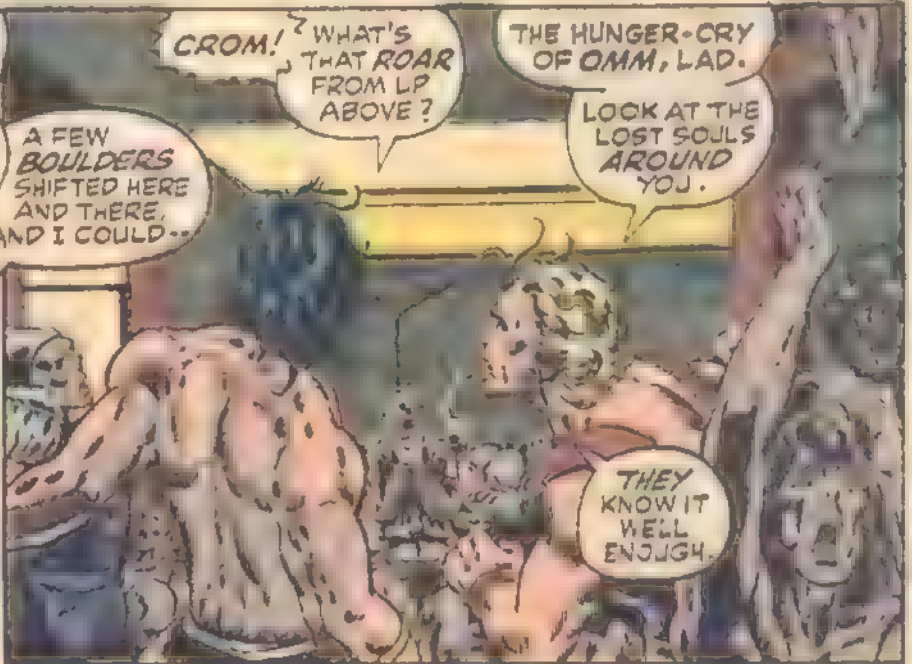


CROM! WHAT'S THAT ROAR FROM UP ABOVE?

THE **HUNGER-CRY** OF **OMM**, LAD.

LOOK AT THE **LOST SOULS** AROUND YOU.

THEY KNOW IT WELL ENOUGH.



WHAT'S **WRONG** WITH THESE PEOPLE?

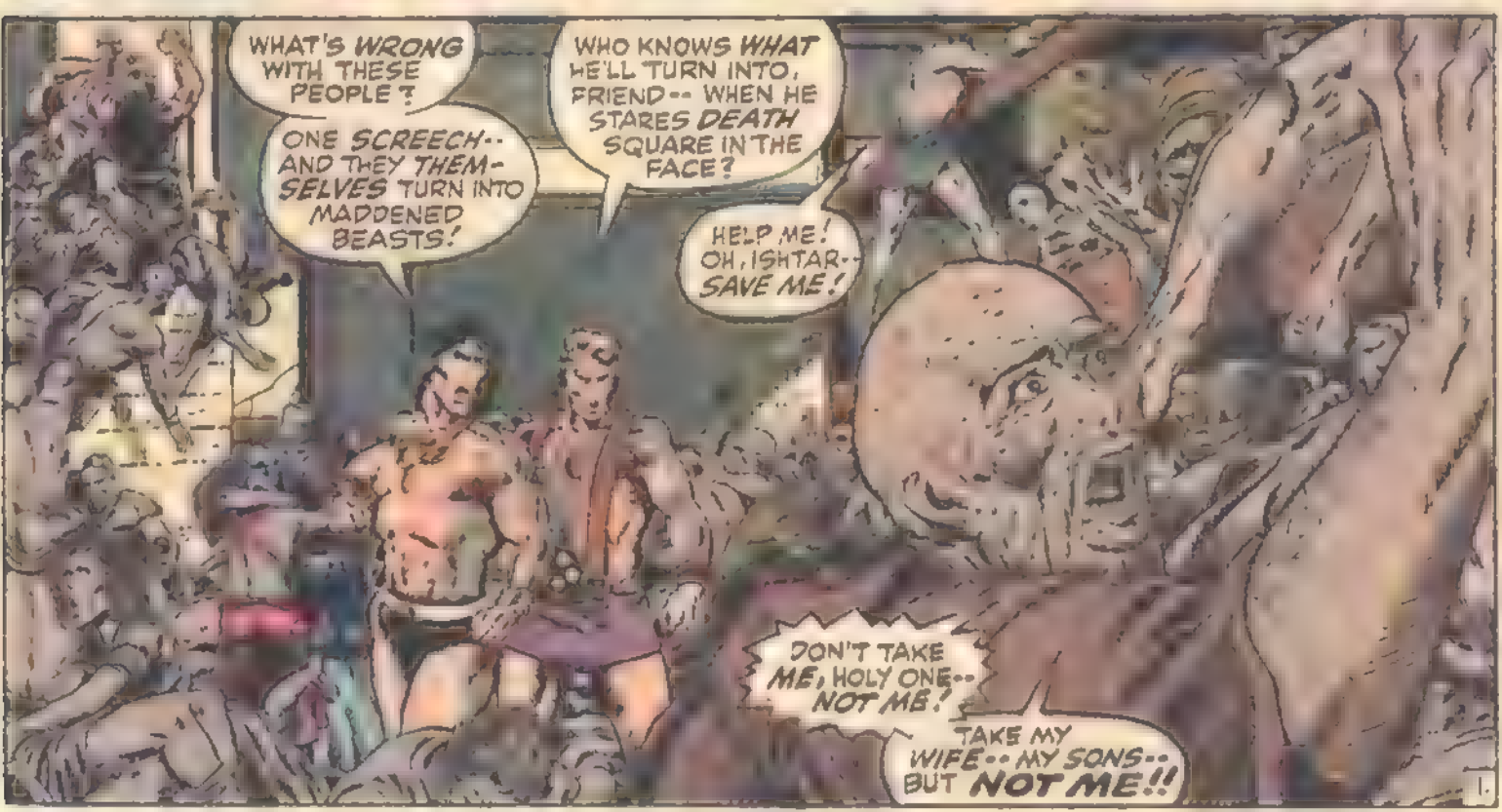
ONE **SCREECH**-- AND THEY THEMSELVES TURN INTO **MADDENED BEASTS!**

WHO KNOWS WHAT HE'LL TURN INTO, FRIEND-- WHEN HE STARES **DEATH** SQUARE IN THE FACE?

HELP ME! OH, **ISHTAR**-- **SAVE ME!**

DON'T TAKE ME, HOLY ONE-- **NOT ME!**

TAKE MY **WIFE**-- MY **SONS**-- BUT **NOT ME!!**



BACK OFF THERE, SWINE!

YOU THERE-- BARBARIAN-- AND THAT FARMER YOU BROUGHT WITH YOU---

OMM WANTS YOUR BONES TO PICK CLEAN FIRST.

FATHER--!

GUARDS! MY FATHER CAME HERE TO RESCUE ME.

NO, GIRL. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.

IF HE MUST PERISH, I WISH TO DIE AT HIS SIDE.

AWAY, WENCH--OR YOU'LL DIE RIGHT HERE.

NOW, ARE YOU TWO COMING, OR--?

OR WHAT, DOG?

TORK-- YOU WITLESS SON OF A ZAMORIAN--

DON'T JUST STAND THERE!

DIDN'T YOU HAVE WORK TO DO--- SOMEWHERE ELSE?

WHY-- YES--

YES, BY MITRA-- I DID!

FORGET HIM! IT'S THIS ONE WE WANT--

-- AND THIS ONE WE'VE GOT.

NO MORE FIGHT LEFT IN YOU, SAVAGE?


A BLADE IS--- TOO CERTAIN. I'LL TAKE MY CHANCE WITH OMM.

THAT I WANT TO SEE!


CONAN, CONAN-- BETTER FAR THAT YOU ARE MAD, LACKEY'S STEEL, BEYOND DOUBT. THAN WHAT AWAITS YOU AT THE MANY HANDS OF OMM!

I'VE FOUGHT LARGE SPIDERS BEFORE, OLD MAN --INSIDE A ZAMORIAN TOWER, IT WAS.

-- AND, IT'S NOT LIKELY THAT THIS ONE WILL BE ANY LARGER THAN---



YOU PAUSE IN
MID-BOAST,
BARBARIAN...



IS IT SIMPLY
YOUR SURPRISE
AT SEEING MODAR,
HIGH PRIEST OF YEZUD,
IN THESE-- HIS
RIGHTFUL
VESTMENTS?

COULD IT BE THE
SPECTACLE OF OUR
PREVIOUS OFFERINGS--
BOTH THOSE WHO HAVE
ALREADY SERVED, AND
THOSE WHO PATIENTLY
WAIT TO SERVE?

OR IS IT,
PERHAPS, THE
SIGHT OF THE
SPIDER-GOD
HIMSELF-- FAR
TOO HUGE, TOO
MAGNIFICENT
TO BE CONTAINED
IN ANY TOWER?

I GIVE YOU --- **OMM,**
THE UNSPEAKABLE!



WHAT SAY YOU, SAVAGE? NEVER MIND. I CAN FEEL YOUR HACKLES RISE FROM HERE.

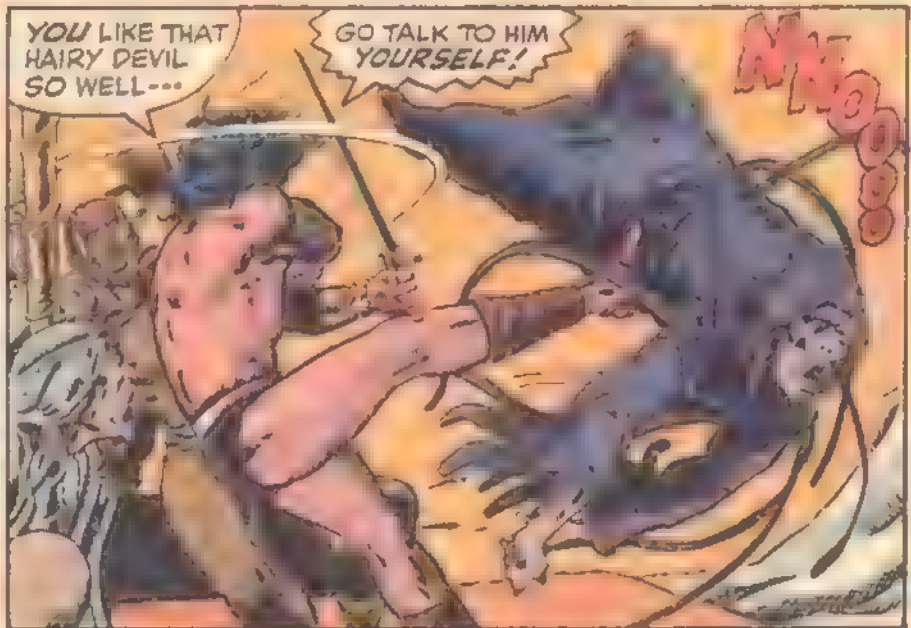
YOU'RE BRAVE ENOUGH AGAINST HUMAN FOES---



--- BUT, ALL YOU BARBARIANS FEAR THE SUPERNATURAL, DON'T YOU?

WELL, A BIT OF BLOOD--- TO DRAW GREAT OMM'S ATTENTION..

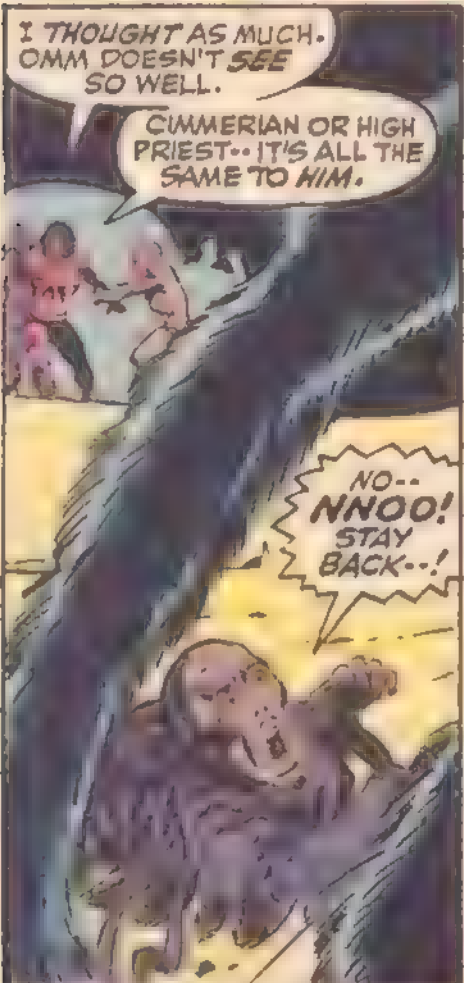
-- AND THEN YOU CAN GET TO KNOW HIM *BETTER*, EH?



YOU LIKE THAT HAIRY DEVIL SO WELL---

GO TALK TO HIM YOURSELF!

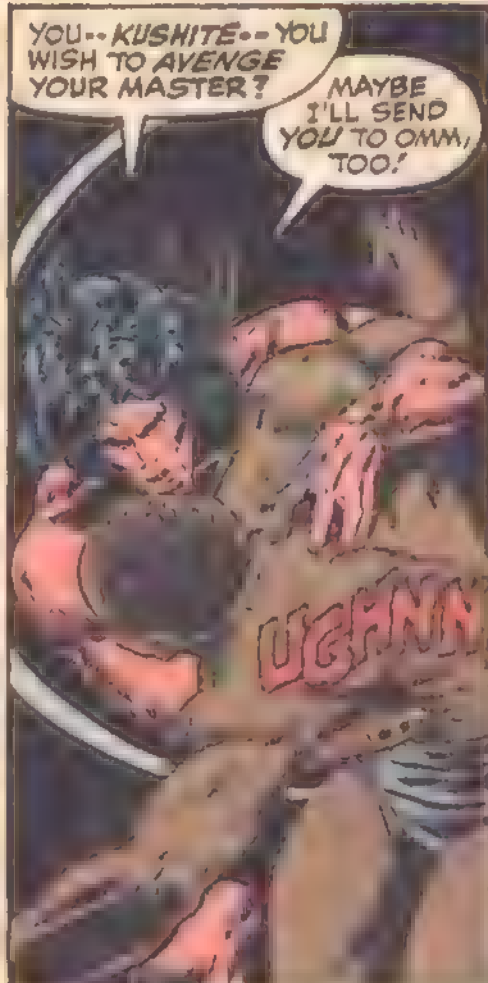
MMOOOO



I THOUGHT AS MUCH. OMM DOESN'T *SEE* SO WELL.

CIMMERIAN OR HIGH PRIEST.. IT'S ALL THE SAME TO HIM.

NO.. **NNOO!** STAY BACK..!



YOU-- KUSHITE-- YOU WISH TO AVENGE YOUR MASTER?

MAYBE I'LL SEND YOU TO OMM, TOO!

UGHNN



I'VE A FAR *BETTER* IDEA, OUTLANDER.

WHY DON'T YOU *BOTH* GO?

THE HYBORIAN PAGE

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Dear Stan,

Okay, I just wanna say that after collecting and reading comics for over two years, I was just about ready to quit spending my hard-earned cash on 'em.

Then I went through CONAN #9 . . . Whew!!! By Crom, I don't exactly know how to express this, but . . . oh, well, I'll just say that it was definately a landmark comic mag for your company. The art was probably the best I've come across in a long time (not a single word on page 11 . . . Wow.). The cover was a very close summation of what was actually inside. (The lack of word balloons, as far as I'm concerned, enhanced the quality of the cover). And the plot could easily have come from ancient unrecorded history. (The black-winged entity's race must have been extremely sophisticated to predict its own grand finale by fire—on page 28, panel 4). Well, before my praise gets out of hand . . .

Let me end my letter by saying that I would appreciate it if you would keep from raising the price on your mags. I wouldn't stop buying Marvel Comics if the price did go up, but I wouldn't be able to get more than one copy of an issue.

Until Conan gets a job as a riveter on the SST, MAKE MINE MARVEL!!!

Mike Morrison, 5104 Woodlawn N.,
Seattle, Wash. 98103

We will, Mike, even though we'll have to settle now for your just buying one copy of each ish. Sorry 'bout that, but it seems that old debbil inflation is more powerful than Conan and Kull put together.

It might be worth mentioning that the Robert E. Howard tale on which our ninth issue was based was "The Garden of Fear" (natch), which was last printed in an out-of-print hard-cover volume entitled The Dark Man and Others, a collection of some of REH's better non-Conan efforts. 'Twas an easy matter, however, to make the hero of that little classic into Conan, the heroine into Jenna—and the resulting captions were perhaps 50% Howard.

(Interesting sidenote: There wasn't a single word of dialogue in the original story—so the hardest part of the adapting was to find excuses for Conan and Jenna to speak. Personally, we'd have dug trying a whole issue without word balloons, but hard-core experience has shown that such comics almost always fail to sell—and, in the long run, an issue of CONAN which sold about 2% would benefit nobody, especially not the reader who wants to see the mag continued. This whole tirade, by the way, is by way of explaining things to those diehard few who write in each and every month to beg us to do a whole issue of CONAN without word balloons. 'Taint possible, people!)

Dear Group,

As a reader of comics since childhood, I have never found myself so thoroughly bedazzled by a series prior to CONAN. Here we find a multi-faceted character growing and learning in a strange but plausible world. The writers and artists of this series tend to complement and expand on Howard's art, making CONAN far more than mere entertainment. The continued appearances of Jenna are welcome, though she is not the most interesting of females thus far presented. The major fear in my mind is the continued overabundance of fabulous towers, treasures, and magic beasts. Hopefully they will all fit into the greater mythology, but there is a danger that the reader will grow weary with too much stress on magic. Conan is a very human figure; from time to time it might be refreshing to put his sword to use against purely human foes. These complaints are minor and relative. My thanks for bringing CONAN to the public.

May Your House Be Free from the
Anger of Thoth-Amon,
W.D. Barry

And our thanks for your support, W.D.
Incidentally, there'll be no issue of CONAN THE BARBARIAN next month—but never fear, we're not discontinuing Marvel's most unique mag. Actually, we planned to make it bimonthly for a time, both because of slightly sagging sales plus wear and tear on artist Barry Smith—not to mention writer Roy Thomas as well. However, things have improved since then, so after a well-deserved one-month rest, Roy and Barry will be back at the helm (and so, hopefully, will inker Sal Buscema) with our first two-parter, in which the battling Cimmerian meets Elric, the fabulous sword-and-sorcery creation of English fantasy writer Michael Moorcock. Meanwhile, how'd the ranks of Conan rooters like the tale plotted by s-f writer John Jakes for this issue? Let us know, huh, 'cause he and Roy would kinda like to do another story together sometime.

Dear Stan, Roy, and Barry,

Without a doubt, CONAN THE BARBARIAN is the best new comic, in my opinion, to hit the stands in the past five years. Why? A superb combination of imagery and realism, and, of course, the genius of Howard. The format of a comic-book does lack in its length, amount of words that can be used, etc., but you have made up for it in a unique way. I had read a fair amount of Howard, mostly Conan, and, while good, it did not seem real to me, or even cause any images of the Hyborian age to really form in my mind. But in the panels of Barry Smith's art, I see a vast world extending out beyond the reaches of the white borders. Images, no matter how fantastic, are either real to us or vague. The reality of the CONAN comic is the superb imagery, the way it makes my imagination work. This is the major fault with television programs—there is no thinking involved. The primitive, and yet astonishingly realistic drawings of Barry Smith spark the human imagination with the smell of blood, the taste of dust, the sounds and sights of Howard's great creation. This is why the fantasy is realistic—not because what happens is logical and worldly, but because it makes you use your imagination. I have seldom experienced this in any form of literature or communication, but it is waiting for those who stare deep into each panel, read the words, close their eyes—and are suddenly THERE.

I first noticed this in issue #6, a good issue, though not the best story. The interpretation made up for any vagueness or lack of imagination in the plot. Another comment for Frazetta freaks: Frazetta has the advantage of an easel and a set of oils, which he uses beautifully, but I doubt that with pencil in hand he would give the same feeling to Conan. Frazetta is good—make no mistake—but aside from bad coloring and inking, Smith's art has been excellent so far for the comic form. In issue #7, the inking improved, but the coloring was still out of place. I suggest you keep Smith and Adkins on the mag for a long time; soon they will have perfected Conan and assured Frazetta disciples all over that this IS Conan. If the mag continues developing as it has, you may just have the best comic-book ever produced. I'm reading more Howard now, and seeing some great adventures ahead if you follow the biography. Thank you for your imagination and hard work.

Crom,
C. B. Davis, 9459 Buffalo Ave.,
Orangeville, Calif. 95662

And we will be following the same sketchy biography which various fans have worked out for Conan's chronology, C.B. Only thing is, Roy and Barry will be doing it in their own offbeat way.

Most CONAN readers seem to dig the inking of both Dan Adkins and Sal Buscema equally, by the way, so we'll probably keep the latter artist on the mag for the present. However, the titanic team of Thomas, Kane, and Adkins—which co-created some of the most memorable issues of the late CAPTAIN MARVEL title—have joined forces on a brand-new feature in the pages of MARVEL PREMIERE #1, on sale any day now. (We don't wanna tell you its name or subject just yet, but we think it's destined to be one of Marvel's most memorable series of all! A word to the wise, pilgrim.)

KNOW YE THESE, THE HALLOWED RANKS OF MARVELDOM:

- | | | | |
|---------------|---|---------------|---|
| R.F.O. | (Real Frantic One)—A buyer of at least 3 Marvel mags a month. | K.O.F. | (Keeper Of the Flame)—One who recruits a newcomer to Marvel's rollickin' ranks. |
| T.T.B. | (Titanic True Believer)—A divinely-inspired 'No-Prize' winner. | P.M.M. | (Permanent Marvelite Maximus)—Anyone possessing all four of the other titles. |
| Q.N.S. | (Quite 'Nuff Sayer)—A fortunate frantic one who's had a letter printed. | F.F.F. | (Fearless Front-Facer)—An honorary title bestowed for devotion to Marvel above and beyond the call of duty. |

LIKE ONE PLUNGING
HEADLONG INTO A MAD-
MAN'S NIGHTMARE,
YOUNG CONAN TOPPLES
TO THE WEB-SMEARED
CAVERN FLOOR---

...JUST IN TIME TO
SEE THE HAPLESS
MODAR VANISH INTO
THE CLACKING JAWS
OF THE GREAT
SPIDER---

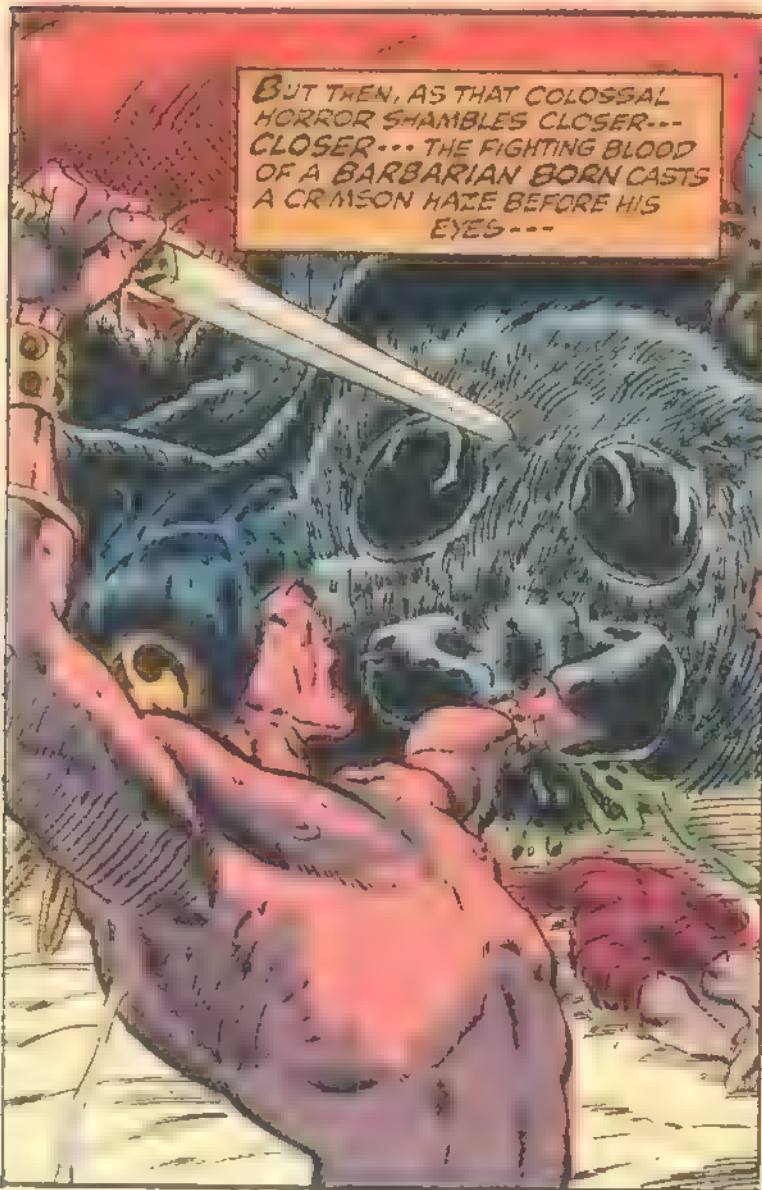


FOR A MOMENT'S SHADOW, THE SWEAT-
BATHED CIMMERIAN RELIVES A VISION,
ONCE-GLIMPSED AND HALF-FORGOTTEN
---A FATAL PROPHECY---

HE IS FILLED WITH
SUPERSTITIOUS
DREAD AND--YES
WITH MIND-NUMBING
FEAR---

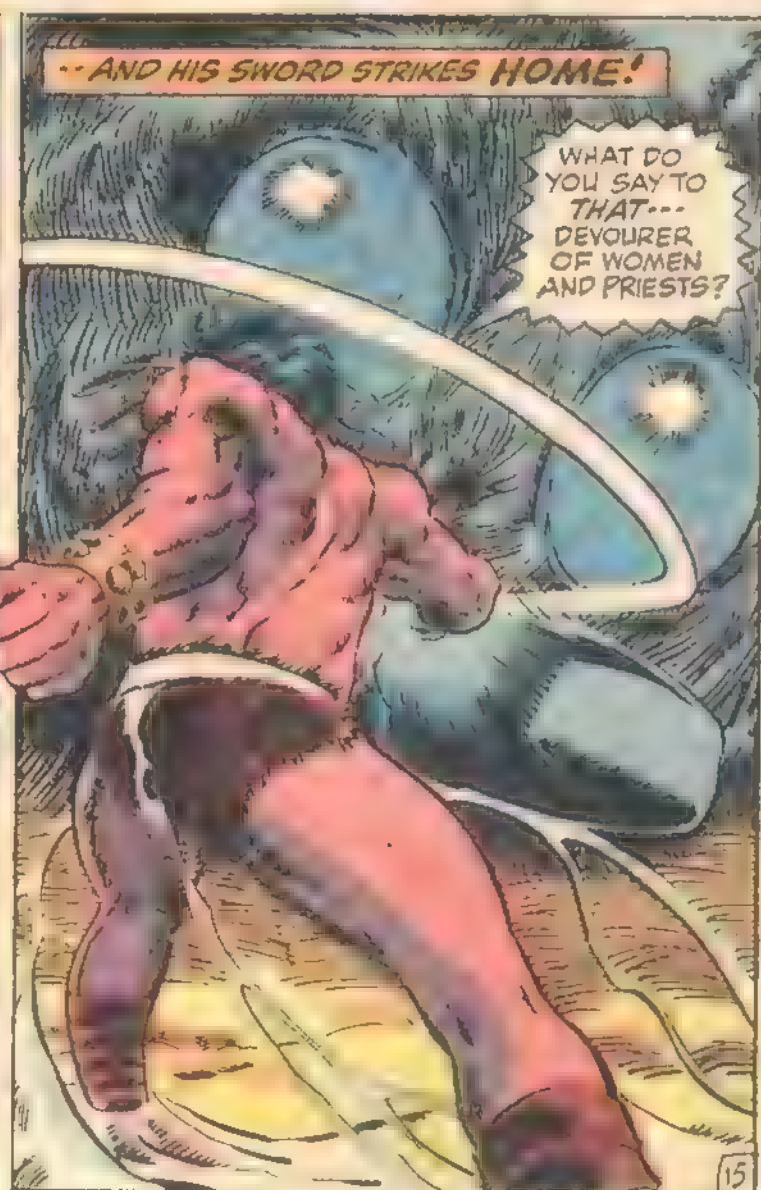


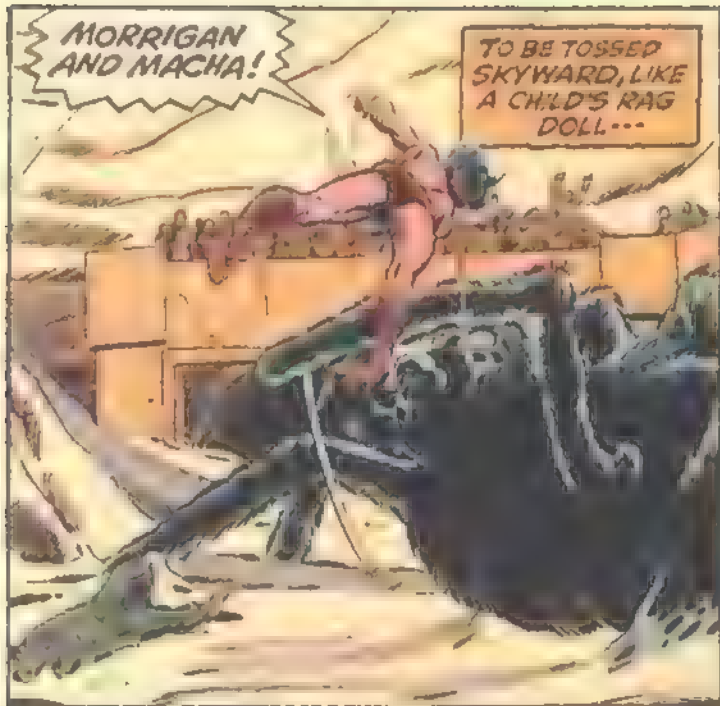
BUT THEN, AS THAT COLOSSAL
HORROR SHAMBLES CLOSER--
CLOSER--- THE FIGHTING BLOOD
OF A BARBARIAN BORN CASTS
A CRIMSON HAZE BEFORE HIS
EYES---



--AND HIS SWORD STRIKES HOME!

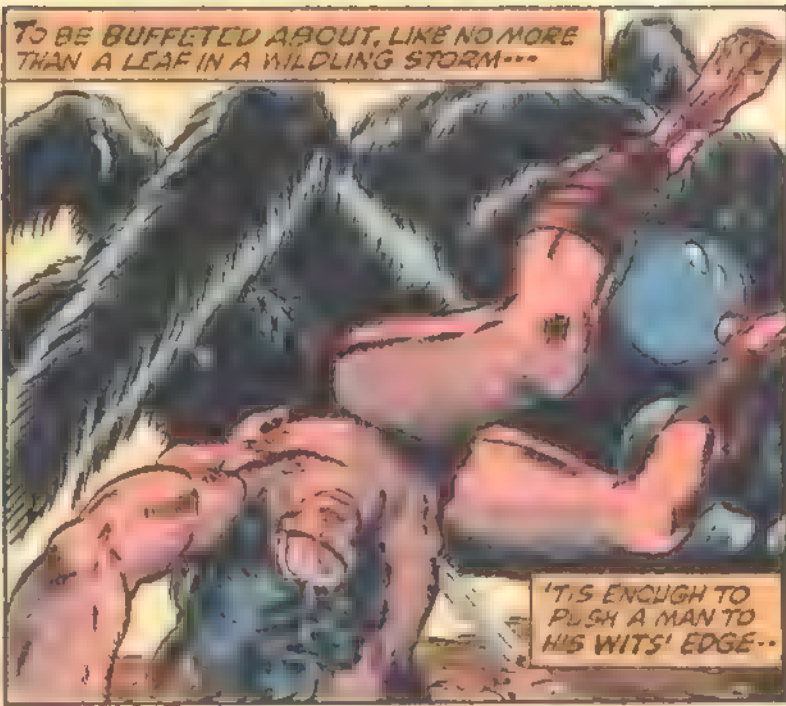
WHAT DO
YOU SAY TO
THAT---
DEVOURER
OF WOMEN
AND PRIESTS?





MORRIGAN
AND MACHA!

TO BE TOSSED
SKYWARD, LIKE
A CHILD'S RAG
DOLL---

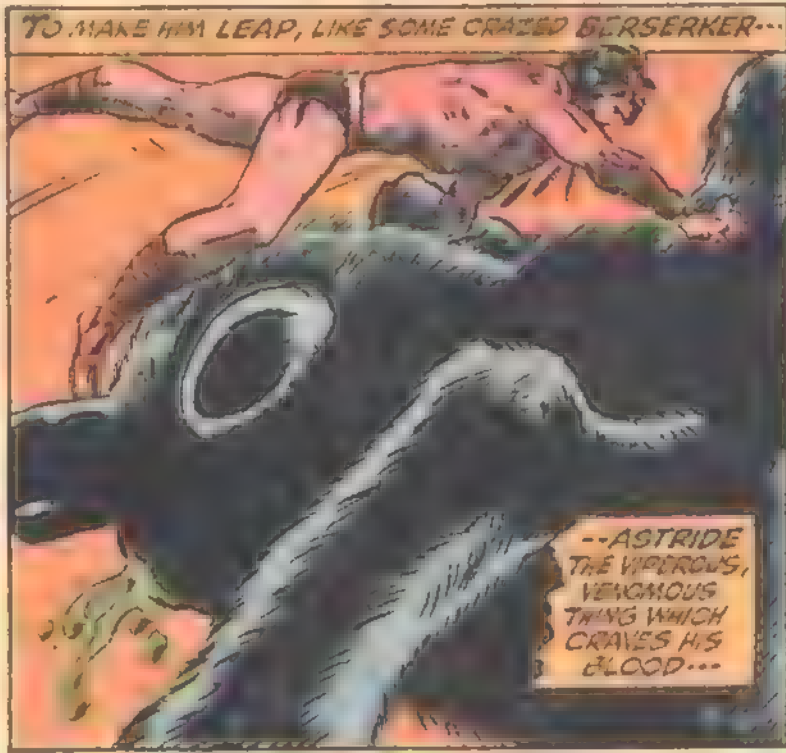


TO BE BUFFETED ABOUT, LIKE NO MORE
THAN A LEAF IN A WINDLING STORM---

'T'S ENOUGH TO
PUSH A MAN TO
HIS WITS' EDGE--

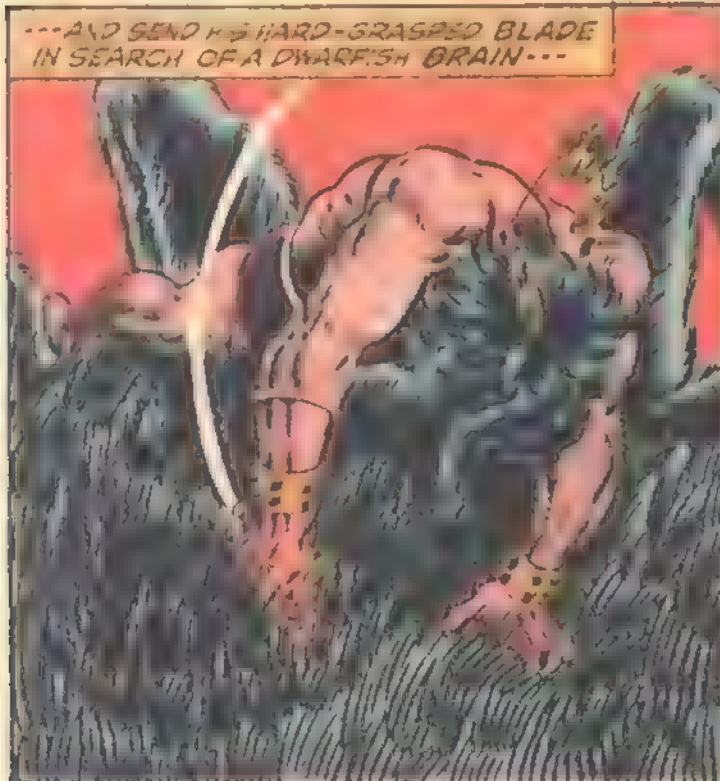


--OR
ENOUGH
TO DRIVE
HIM
MAD!!

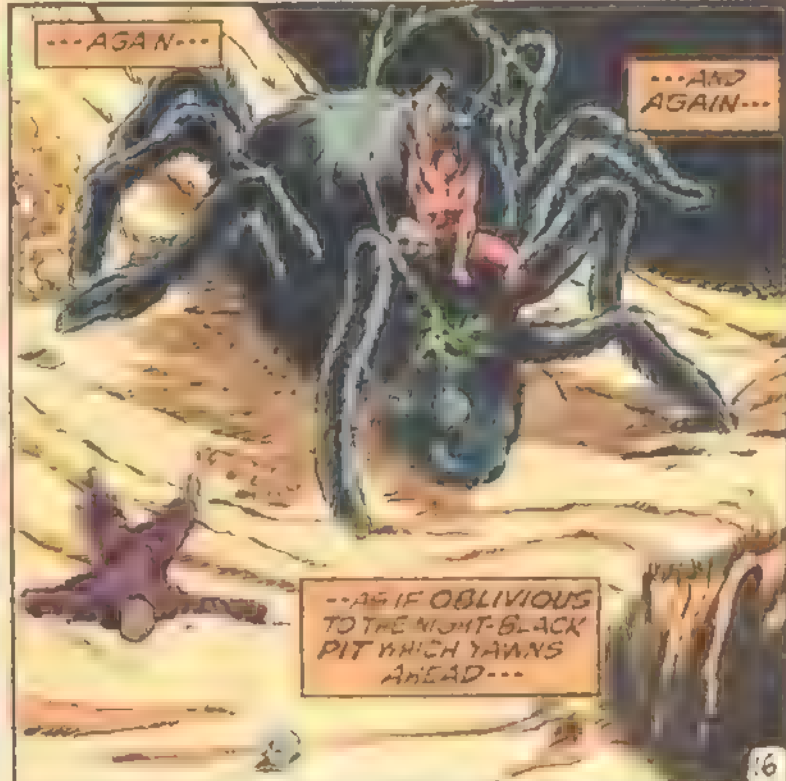


TO MAKE HIM LEAP, LIKE SOME CRAZED BERSERKER---

--ASTRIDE
THE VIBRANT,
VENOMOUS
THING WHICH
CRAVES HIS
BLOOD---



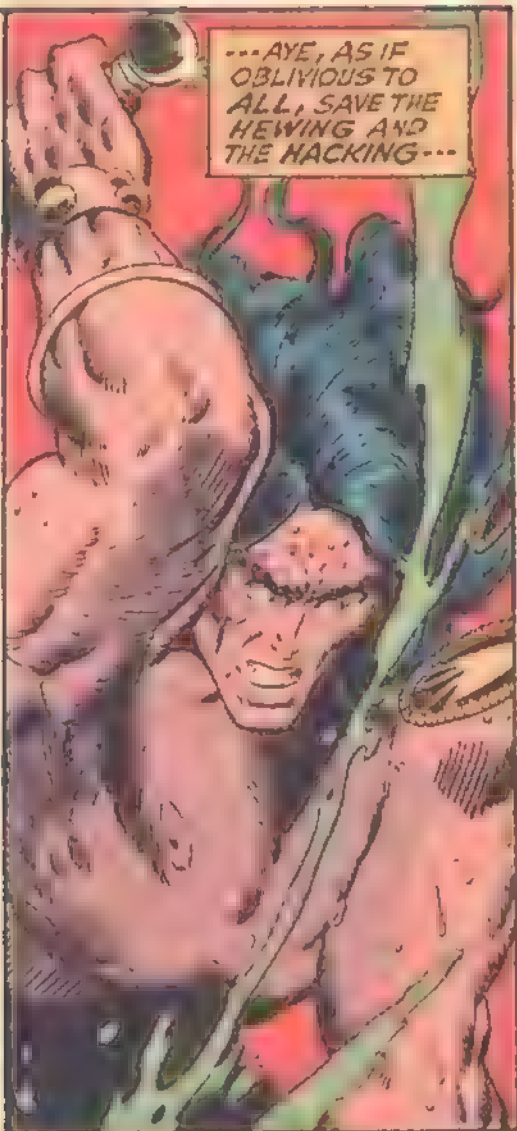
---AND SEND HIS HARD-GRASPED BLADE
IN SEARCH OF A DWARFISH BRAIN---



---AGAIN---

...AND
AGAIN---


--AS IF OBLIVIOUS
TO THE NIGHT-BLACK
PIT WHICH YAWNS
AHEAD---



---AYE, AS IF
OBLIVIOUS TO
ALL, SAVE THE
HEWING AND
THE HACKING---

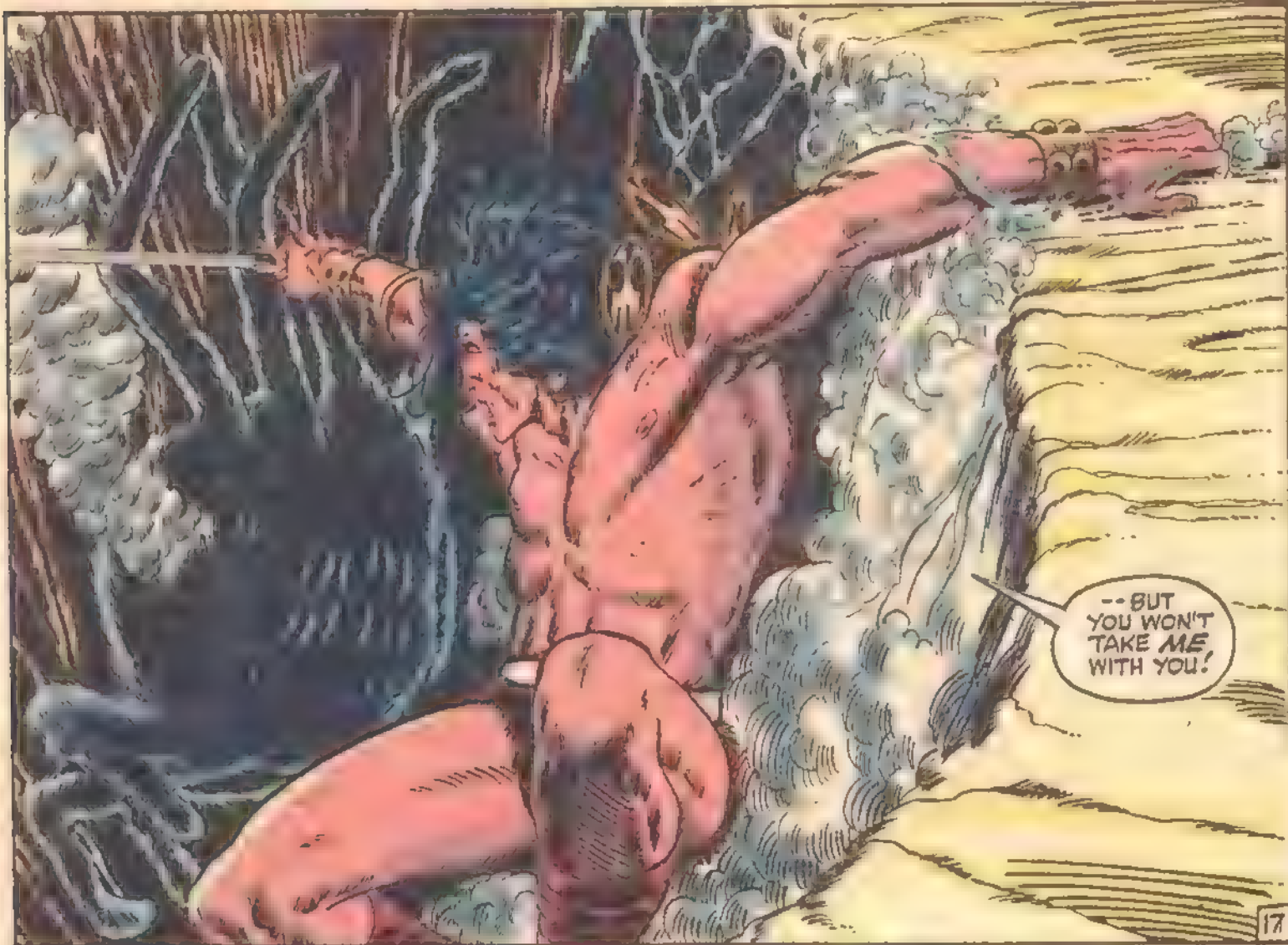
---UNTIL, SUDDENLY---

**CROM'S
DEVILS!**



**HAH! IT SEEMS I'VE
HURT YOU MORE THAN
I THOUGHT, OLD
CLACKER.**

WELL, GO
AHEAD AND
TUMBLE
BACK INTO
HELL, IF
YOU WANT
TO---



-- BUT
YOU WON'T
TAKE ME
WITH YOU!

THEN, EVEN AS STRAINING SINEWS PULL HIM SLOWLY, ACHINGLY, UP FROM THE GAPING CHASM---

--CONAN HEARS THE CRY HE HAS KNOWN MUST COME---

DEATH!
DEATH TO THE SLAYER OF OMM!

AND HE STANDS READY, THOUGH HIS ARMS DANGLE LIKE LEADEN WEIGHTS---

---READY TO FIGHT THE BLOOD-MAD SWARMS WHOSE GOD HE HAS DESTROYED---

---READY-- TO DIE!

AND YET, SUCH ARE MANIAS OF MOB-RULE, THAT OFTEN THEY ATTACK NOT THE SOURCE OF THEIR DISPLEASURE--- BUT THE OBJECT NEAREST AT HAND---

THE OLD MAN-- AND THE GIRL! THEY'RE THE BARBARIAN'S FRIENDS.

KILL THEM FIRST, THEN!

YES-- KILL!!

NO--!

I'LL HOLD THEM OFF, DAUGHTER, AS LONG AS I--

LEA!

SHE JUMPED-- OR FELL --INTO THE SACRED ARENA!

OUTLANDER--- DO NOT BOTHER WITH ME. I AM-- NOTHING.

MY FATHER! YOU MUST SAVE MY FATHER--!

I'LL TRY, IF I CAN--



HE'S-- BEYOND SAVING, GIRL.



THIS ONE'S DONE. NOW FOR--

THAT SOUND! WHAT IN THE UNHOLY NAME OF..?

THE WALLS-- THEY'RE SHAKING --TREMBLING--!



I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING, GIRL--

BUT WE'D BEST GET OUT OF HERE, BEFORE--



BLAST ME FOR A FOOL! OF COURSE-- IT'S TORK!

HE'S SHIFTED THOSE BOULDERS HE TALKED ABOUT-- AND THE CITY IS FALLING TO PIECES!

NOT THAT IT'LL DO US MUCH GOOD, IF WE DON'T-- WHAT--?

BARBARIAN--- M-MERCY--!



THAT VOICE! I KNOW THAT WHINING VOICE, BUT WHO--?

HELP ME-- PLEASE--!



SO MUCH SMOKE IN MY EYES-- I CAN BARELY SEE.

BUT.. NO MATTER--



HERE -- GIVE ME YOUR--

THE MAN OF
MANY SCARS!

FOR AN INSTANT, THE MIND OF CONAN IS
ABLAZE WITH CONFLICTING PASSIONS--

AND
THEN--

ARRR

--THE MATTER IS TAKEN
OUT OF HIS HANDS--

--NOR DOES
HE PAUSE
TO LOOK
BACK
AGAIN!

THE STAIRWAY
TO THE STREET
--IN FLAMES!

BUT
HOLD
YOUR
BREATH,
GIRL--

FOR, THERE
ARE OTHER
WAYS.

OUTLANDER--
THAT HORSE--

SO YOU CAN
STILL TALK,
EH?

YOU'RE
RIGHT! HE'S
JUST WHAT
WE NEED.

BUT HE'S BOLT-
ING-- FRENZIED BY
THE FIRE AND NOISE!

CALM
DOWN,
HORSE--



FOR LONG, HEART-STOPPING MOMENTS, EARTH AND SKY SEEM TO MEET-- TO THRUST REMORSELESSLY, ONE AGAINST THE OTHER-- TILL THRICE-- DAMNED YEZUD IS GROUND TO DUST AND ASHES BETWEEN THEM---

SOMEONE RUNNING TOWARD US-- FROM THE OPPOSITE WAY--

IT'S THE ZAMORIAN NAMED TORK!

BARBARIAN! THEN-- YOU MANAGED TO ESCAPE.

NOW TELL ME-- DOES TORK KNOW HIS TRADE, OR DOESN'T HE?

IT WOULD SEEM HE DOES.

SO THE KING OF ZAMORA WILL TOAST A NEW HERO IN HIS SUMPTUOUS PALACE.

PERHAPS. BUT YOU, FRIEND? DID YOU BEHAVE BETTER THAN THE OTHERS, WHEN YOU STARED DEATH IN THE HAIRY FACE?

THE MAN WHO DOES NOT TREMBLE AT THE THOUGHT OF DEATH---

---HAS NEVER TRULY THOUGHT OF IT AT ALL.

AND, THE GIRL---

SHE HAS NO ONE NOW.

PERHAPS SHE'D LIKE TO GO TO SHADIZAR WITH ME, EH?

I CAN SPEAK--- TORK.

AND...YES, I THINK I WOULD.

GO THEN. I TRUST YOU KNOW THE WAY, TORK. ME, I'LL JUST TAKE THE HORSE.

I MIGHT AS WELL GET SOMETHING FROM THIS NIGHT'S LABORS.

IF YOU'RE EVER IN SHADIZAR, FRIEND, COME SEE ME. I DWELL AT THE KING'S COURT.

I'LL DO THAT, FRIEND---

NOR DO I BLAME YOU, GIRL, THAT YOU CHOSE A COURTIER'S TOUCH TO A BARBARIAN'S ROUGH EMBRACE.

STILL, I THINK YOU'LL FIND YOU'D HAVE BEEN SAFEST WITH ME, AFTER ALL...

---OR I DON'T KNOW SHADIZAR THE WICKED.

FNIS